

The Model Prayer

An Analysis

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“The Model Prayer”

Mt. 6:9-15

The words before us are sometimes regarded as the Lord’s Prayer. However, that particular designation may more appropriately be applied to John 17 where Jesus prays for Himself, His current disciples and those who will be followers of Him in the future. He prays for their preservation, consecration, unification, and glorification.

Even though some may object to this consideration, the passage before us may, indeed, be regarded as a *model* of prayer. That is, it offers guidelines or pivotal points around which meaningful prayer may be arranged. With this understanding, it is the purpose before us to regard it as such and to briefly address the words in particular and their potential meaning for acceptable prayer to God.

This Model Prayer in Mt. 6:9-15 is a prayer which many could quote with ease. But when we look at the words which make up this prayer, many may actually be totally out of touch with what it actually means. We now note the precise words within this model or example or pattern of prayer.

Our – If we do not have a sense of the collective body-member nature of our relationship with one another in the Church of Jesus Christ, we may not, in reality, use this word. After all, Christianity is no solo act, even though entrance to it is, indeed, individually based or oriented. Thereafter, it is an *us-ness* or collective enterprise. Christianity may not be divorced from fellow-members of the Church. There must always be room for others and their spiritual gifts and needs.

Father – Having a sense of God being *Father* is a direct spin-off & essential part of our relationship with one another. It denotes that we trace our connectedness with one another in direct proportion to our awareness of our common Fatherhood with God. If we do not have that sense of “fatherhood & brotherhood” then we do not do justice to this word. This is seen not only in corporate worship but also in daily living with one another.

Who art in heaven – If our interest in God is primarily for our earthly benefits & worldly mindsets, we do not properly acknowledge God as One Who is supreme and whose residence is above where an eternal home is being prepared for His children. If our interests and pursuits are primarily geared toward earthly desires and directions, we may need to reevaluate our claims about the Christian faith. In the words of Col. 3:1-2: “If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.”

Hallowed by Thy name – The word “*hallowed*” means a name that is to be ‘set apart’ above and beyond all others. His “name” stands for Himself – a God Who is holy and who demands holiness from His children. In the words of I Pt.1:14-16: “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts in your ignorance, but like the Holy One Who called you, be holy yourselves also in all behavior, because it is written, ‘You shall be holy for I am holy.’”

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done – God’s “*kingdom*” refers to His reigning or rulership or Lordship over life. The child of God will consistently have this mindset of desiring His Lordship over one’s life. Also, to add “His will” being done is another way of saying the same thing. This is called Hebrew parallelism or saying the same thing in different words. Therefore, if we are resentful or resistant to God’s will being done in our lives, we are not praying and cannot pray.

On earth as it is in heaven – God’s “*kingdom*” or “*will*” is being done in heaven. By yielding ourselves to Him in every capacity, we are ensuring that it is also being done in our section of the earth. This should be our daily desire.

Give us this day our daily bread – Here we are recognizing or confessing that God is the author of every good and perfect gift relative to “*food*” or that which helps sustain the body. The words “*this day*” & “*daily*” indicate that we do not fret or worry about yesterday or tomorrow in God’s ability to provide for our needs. However, it also includes our own ability to work and spend honest efforts to provide for ourselves and family. After all, the one who fails in this regard is said to have “denied the faith and is worse than an infidel” (1 Tim. 5:8).

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us – Here we recognize the sinfulness of ourselves and others in this world. As such, it requires the ongoing process of forgiveness *received & given*. As Jesus adds a bit later (vs. 14-15), if we do not actively participate in this endless cycle of receiving & rendering forgiveness to others, we thereby reveal our lack of consciousness of the nature of God, as well as that of being human.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil - The prayer now turns from considerations about past sins to possible future sins. Thus, the prayer is for God’s leadership in our lives to such an extent that He will help us to not even be exposed to situations we may find irresistible. The purpose of such is so that our lives are a living testimony to His power to live life effectively and meaningfully. 1 Cor. 10:13 put it this way: “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man, and God Who is faithful will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able to bear but will with the temptation provide the way of escape also that you may be able to endure it.”

Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever – These three different words are used to reinforce & maintain the *eternal authority* of God in our prayer life & elsewhere. If we are seeking our own rule, abilities and glory, then we violate the very nature and meaning of prayer. It will be prayer which reaches no higher than the roof of our mouths.

Amen – This word means *so be it, let it be so, or say it again*. In other words, whatever it takes, let this prayer be a reality in our lives individually and collectively as the body of Christ on this earth. By so doing, it takes us back to the opening word: “our.”